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Message Text

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S/S - MR. ORTIZ
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SUBJECT: PRESS SUMMARY, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1975

FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY INGERSOLL FROM S/PRS

1. ISLANDERS WERE EVICTED FOR U.S. BASE -- DAVID OTTAWAY WASHPOST: "MORE THAN A THOUSAND INHABITANTS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND OF DIEGO GARCIA, WHICH THE PENTAGON TOLD CONGRESS WAS VIRTUALLY UNINHABITED, WERE FORCIBLY REMOVED BEFORE 1972 TO MAKE WAY FOR A CONTROVERSIAL AMERICAN NAVAL BASE THERE.

"THE ISLANDERS ARE NOW LIVING IN ABJECT POVERTY HERE IN MAURITIUS, MORE THAN A THOUSAND MILES AWAY, AND HAVE BEEN PETITIONING THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN EMBASSIES AS WELL AS THE MAURITIAN GOVERNMENT FOR HELP. BUT WASHINGTON HAS REJECTED ALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR PLIGHT AND LONDON HAS PLACED THE ONUS ON MAURITIUS, WHICH ALREADY FACES SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

"...ONE AMERICAN RELIEF ORGANIZATION ATTEMPTED IN 1972 TO
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RAISE THE ISSUE OF U.S. 'CO-RESPONSIBILITY' FOR THE FATE OF THE DIEGO GARCIANS, BUT THE STATE DEPT. REPLIED THAT THEIR PROBLEMS ARE STRICTLY THE CONCERN OF BRITAIN AND MAURITIUS, AND NOT IN ANY WAY THOSE OF THE U.S.

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"THE ORGANIZATION HAS THUS BEEN OBLIGED TO TRY TO HELP THE
DIEGO GARCIANS WITHOUT ASSISTANCE FROM THE U.S. GOVERNMENT.

"...IN THE LAST YEAR, THE DIEGO GARCIANS HAVE ORGANIZED
AND HAVE ASKED BRITAIN AND THE U.S. TO PRESS THE
MAURITIAN GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE THEM WITH HOUSING, LAND,
JOBS AND OTHER FACILITIES TO START A NEW LIFE.

"ABOUT SIX MONTHS AGO, THEY DREW UP A FORMAL PETITION AND
PRESENTED IT TO THE BRITISH EMBASSY, WITH COPIES DELIVERED
TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY, MAURITIAN PM SEEWOOSAGUR RAMGOOLAM,
AND SEVERAL OPPOSITION LEADERS. THEY ALSO DISCUSSED THEIR
PLIGHT WITH U.S. EMBASSY OFFICIALS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

"(A SPOKESMAN FOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN WASHINGTON SAID
THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY PETITION AND THAT THE DEPART-
MENT IS NOT CONSIDERING ANY ACTION 'AT THIS TIME.'

"A BRITISH EMBASSY SPOKESMAN SAID HIS EMBASSY HERE 'HAS NO
KNOWLEDGE' OF THE SITUATION. HE NOTED THAT IF SUCH AN
APPROACH HAD BEEN MADE IN MAURITIUS, THE MATTER WOULD
NORMALLY BE TAKEN UP WITH THE COMMONWEALTH OFFICE IN
LONDON.)..."

2. VIETNAM: THE HOSTAGE GAME AGAIN? -- WASHPOST EDITORIAL:
"THE NEW COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH VIETNAM SEEMS TO BE
HOLDING ABOUT 50 AMERICANS HOSTAGE TO WIN NOT ONLY DIPLOMA-
TIC RELATIONS BUT ECONOMIC AID. SOME OF THE AMERICANS --
CHURCH PEOPLE, DESERTERS, INDIVIDUALS WITH VIETNAMESE
FAMILIES -- STAYED BEHIND VOLUNTARILY WHEN THE THIEU REGIME
FELL IN APRIL; OTHERS WERE TRAPPED. MOST LIVE AROUND
SAIGON BUT 10, INCLUDING TWO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, THREE
WOMEN AND A 5-YEAR-OLD GIRL, ARE IN CUSTODY IN THE INTERIOR.
ALL ARE CUT OFF FROM COMMUNICATION WITH THE OUTSIDE. UNTIL
EARLY AUGUST, AMERICANS WERE TRICKLING OUT. THEN SOUTH
VIETNAM LOWERED THE GATE IN APPARENT REACTION TO THE
AMERICAN VETO OF ITS APPLICATION FOR UNITED NATIONS
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MEMBERSHIP. SAIGON WAS EVIDENTLY NOT MUCH MOLLIFIED BY THE
FACT THAT THE AMERICAN VETO WAS CAST FOR CONSIDERATIONS
ENTIRELY EXTRANEOUS TO SAIGON, WHOSE APPLICATION WASHINGTON
SUPPORTED IN PRINCIPLE; U.S. OPPOSITION WAS IN PROTEST OF
THE U.N.'S REFUSAL TO ADMIT SOUTH KOREAS. THE OTHER DAY THE
LAST AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT WAS EXPELLED. A REPORT HE
THEN FILED MADE PAINFULLY CLEAR THAT THE REMAINING AMERICANS
ARE HOSTAGES TO RECOGNITION AND PAYMENT OF 'DAMAGES.'

THE OFFICIAL AMERICAN VIEW HAS BEEN THAT THE AMERICANS
IN SOUTH VIETNAM SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE ON HUMANITARIAN
GROUNDS. TO THIS END WASHINGTON HAS SOUGHT TO PROD SAIGON
THROUGH THE RED CROSS, UN AND OTHER INTERMEDIARIES. BUT

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THE REGULAR RESPONSE OF THE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT IN SAIGON HAS BEEN THAT IT WOULD DISCUSS THE AMERICANS ONLY IN A PACKAGE INCLUDING POLITICL CONSIDERATIONS. WHILE THE STATUS OF THE AMERICANS WAS UNCLEAR, THE U.S. WAS CAREFUL NOT TO CONFIRM ANY VIETNAMESE TENDENCY TO REGARD THEM AS CHIPS FOR WHICH WASHINGTON WOULD PAY IN POLITICAL BARGAINING. BUT IN THE LAST MONTH SAIGON APPEARS TO HAVE REACHED THIS POSITION ON ITS OWN.

"SAIGON IS MAKING A BIG MISTAKE IF IT BELIEVES THAT THE FEW AMERICANS NOW IN SOUTH VIETNAM CAN SOMEHOW BE EQUATED, IN TERMS OF THEIR VALUE AS HOSTAGES, WITH THE LARGE NUMBER OF MILITARY POWS FOR WHICH THE U.S. WAS WILLING TO 'PAY' NORTH VIETNAM, WITH A 'PEACE AGREEMENT,' SEVERAL YEARS AGO. THE CONDITION OF INTERNAL AMERICAN DIVISION, WHICH ALONG MADE NORTH VIETNAM'S MANIPULATION OF HOSTAGES A FEASIBLE TACTIC, NO LONGER EXISTS. SAIGON SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER THAT NO SINGLE WARTIME POLICY OF HANOI,S BROUGHT UPON IT MORE POPULAR ANTAGONISM THAN ITS USE OF THE HOSTAGE ISSUE. WE SAY THIS, NOT AS A THREAT TO SAIGON BUT MERELY AS A JUDGMENT OF THE CURRENT AMERICAN SCENE. THERE ARE SOME LEGITIMATE DIPLOMATIC AND MORAL REASONS WHY THE U.S. OUGHT TO BE CONSIDERING THE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH SOUTH VIETNAM. RENEWED VIETNAMESE USE OF A HOSTAGE TACTIC ASSOCIATED WITH THE UGLIEST DAYS OF THE WAR PERIOD CAN ONLY SET THIS NECESSARY PROCESS BACK."

3. BREAKTHROUGH IN PANAMA -- EDITORIAL, NYT: "A FORMIDABLE

ROADBLOCK TO A NEW PANAMA CANAL TREATY -- AN IMPERATIVE FOR AMICABLE UNITED STATES RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICA-- HAS BEEN REMOVED AFTER LONG UNCERTAINTY. THAT ADVANCE TAKES THE FORM OF A DECLARATION OF SUPPORT BY THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT AND THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF FOR THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS BEING CONDUCTED BY AMBASSADOR ELLSWORTH. GEN. GEORGE S. BROWN, CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS, EMPHASIZED THE PENTAGON'S COMMITMENT BY ANNOUNCING IT IN PANAMA CITY AFTER TALKS WITH THAT COUNTRY'S STRONGMAN, GEN. OMAR TORRIJOS.

"THIS DECLARATION DOES NOT INSURE AN EARLY, SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION FOR AMBASSADOR BUNKER'S PATIENT EFFORT; A GREAT MANY IMPORTANT PROVISIONS REMAIN TO BE WORKED OUT BY THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. BUT IF THE PENTAGON MEANS WHAT GENERAL BROWN SAID, THE ADMINISTRATION OUGHT TO HAVE A MUCH EASIER TIME IN BUILDING THE ESSENTIAL SUPPORT ON CAPITOL HILL FOR A TREATY THAT WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY PROVIDE FOR TRANSFER OF SUPERVISION OVER THE CANAL TO PANAMA NO LATER THAN THE END OF THIS CENTURY.

"FOR SEVERAL YEARS, BUT ESPECIALLY SINCE SECRETARY OF

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STATE KISSINGER AND PANAMA'S FOREIGN MINISTER SET GUIDE-
LINES FOR A FRESH NEGOTIATING ROUND IN FEBRUARY OF 1974,
OPPOSITION TO ANY TRANSFER OF CONTROL OVER THE CANAL HAS
INCREASED IN CONGRESS. IN A DISGRACEFUL EXHIBITION OF
CHAUVINISM AND IRRESPONSIBILITY, THE HOUSE IN LATE JUNE
VOTED,246 TO 164, TO DENY FUNDS EVEN FOR THE NEGOTIATION
OF WHAT IT CALLED 'THE SURRENDER OR RELINQUISHMENT OF
UNITED STATES RIGHTS IN THE PANAMA CANAL.'

"UNOFFICIAL PENTAGON CRITICISMS OF PROJECTED -- OR
IMAGINED -- PROVISIONS OF A NEW TREATY CONTRIBUTED TO
THE HOUSE ACTION, AS WELL AS TO AN EARLIER SENATE DRIVE
TO BLOCK ANY TRANSFER OF 'SOVEREIGNTY' OVER THE CANAL
ZONE. SENATOR STROM THURMOND OF SOUTH CAROLINA CLAIMS THE
BACKING FOR THIS VIEW OF 37 SENATORS -- THREE MORE THAN
ENOUGH TO BLOCK RATIFICATION OF A TREATY.

"IF, HOWEVER, THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT, INCLUDING THE JOINT
CHIEFS, IS NOW PERSUADED THAT A TREATY ALONG THE LINES
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ENVISIONED BY MR. BUNKER CAN INSURE CONTINUED AMERICAN
USAGE OF THE CANAL AND AN AMERICAN CONTRIBUTION TO ITS
DEFENSE, IT WILL BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE AMATEUR
STRATEGISTS ON CAPITOL HILL TO EXPLOIT THE MILITARY
SECURITY ISSUE BY WAY OF DERAILLING A NEW AGREEMENT.

"IN FACT, THE UNITED STATES HAS NEVER -- NOT EVEN IN THE
ONE-SIDED TREATY FORCED ON THE FLEDLING REPUBLIC OF
PANAMA IN 1903 -- CLAIMED 'SOVEREIGNTY' OVER THE CANAL
ZONE. THIS 500-MILE SQUARE AREA THUS CUTS PANAMA
IN TWO IS THE MOST CONSPICUOUS RELIC OF COLONIALISM TO BE
FOUND ANYWHERE ON EARTH; AND THE PROLONGATION OF AMERICAN
CONTROL WILL MAKE IMPOSSIBLE ANY VIABLE UNITED STATES
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REST OF AN AROUSED HEMISPHERE.

"FOR THE UNITED STATES TO DIG IN AND REFUSE TO CONSIDER
ANY ALTERATION OF THAT RELATIONSHIP WOULD BE TO INVITE THE
VERY DANGER TO THE CANAL AND ITS OPERATIONS THAT THE
CONGRESSIONAL OPPONENTS OF A NEW TREATY PROFESS TO FEAR
MOST. GUERRILLA WAR OF THE TYPE THAT COULD EASILY
DISABLE THE CANAL CANNOT BE RULED OUT IF THE PRESENT
NEGOTIATIONS FAIL -- A FACT THE PENTAGON NOW SEEMS TO
RECOGNIZE EVEN IF STROM THURMOND AND HIS FRIENDS DO NOT;"

4. US JOINS ANGOLAN REFUGEE AIRLIFT -- AP, BALT. SUN:
"THE UNITED STATES JOINED THE EMERGENCY AIRLIFT FOR ANGOLA
REFUGEES AND BY LAST NIGHT HAD FLOWN MORE THAN 500 PERSONS
FROM THE PORTUGUESE COLONY TO LISBON.

"AMONG THE EVACUEES WERE SOME BLACK ANGOLANS SEEKING
SAFETY BEFORE THEIR HOMELAND RECEIVES INDEPENDENCE FROM

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PORTUGAL NOVEMBER 11, BUT MOST WERE WHITE PORTUGUESE SETTLERS ABANDONING THE WEST AFRICAN COLONY...
"TWO AMERICAN AIRLINES, OPERATING ON CHARTER TO THE US GOVERNMENT AT A COST OF ABOUT $5 MILLION IN RESPONSE TO AN APPEAL FROM PORTUGAL, WILL MAKE DAILY FLIGHTS AND ARE EXPECTED TO LIFT OUT AT LEAST 3,500 REFUGEES. THEY ARE TRANSINTERNATIONAL AIRWAYS AND WORLD AIRWAYS.

"U.S. OFFICIALS SAID SELECTION OF THE PASSENGERS WAS IN THE HANDS OF PORTUGUESE AUTHORITIES IN ANGOLA, AND THE
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AMERICAN ROLE WAS LIMITED TO PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION..."

5. U.S. ROLE IN SINAI GAINS IN CONGRESS -- HENRY TREWHITT BALT. SUN: "THE PLAN FOR AMERICANS TO MONITOR THE NEW MIDEAST DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT ADVANCED SLOWLY IN CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES YESTERDAY AS THE ADMINISTRATION STEPPED UP ITS CAMPAIGN TO GUARANTEE THE APPROVAL OF CONGRESS AND PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE.

"INCREASINGLY, MEMBERS OF BOTH THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE SPOKE OF APPROVAL WITHIN TWO WEEKS, THE GOAL SET BY PRESIDENT FORD. THE ONLY UNCERTAINTY CENTERED ON WHAT SOME REFERRED TO AS SECRET UNITED STATES COMMITMENTS, AND WHICH HENRY A. KISSINGER, THE SECRETARY OF STATE, SAID MAY NOT BE MADE PUBLIC.

"IN FACT, INFORMED OFFICIALS SAID, THE CLASSIFIED DETAILS OF THE ARRANGEMENT ALREADY HAVE BEEN MADE PUBLIC UNOFFICIALLY. THEY CONCERN POLITICAL COMMITMENTS BY EGYPT TO ISRAEL -- PASSED THROUGH THE US -- AND US AGREEMENTS TO COORDINATE AND CONSULT WITH ISRAEL IF A NEW CRISIS DEVELOPS, SUCH AS SOVIET INTERVENTION...

"'.-SENATOR FRANK CHURCH (D. IDAHO) SAID HE SAW NOTHING IN THE SECRET DOCUMENTS THAT EXPANDED ON US COMMITMENTS MADE PUBLIC EARLIER.

"OTHERS, HOWEVER, INCLUDING SENATOR STUART SYMINGTON (D. MO.), SAID ALL DETAILS SHOULD BE MADE PUBLIC. ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS HAVE EXPLAINED PRIVATELY THAT EGYPT WANTS SOME OF ITS POLITICAL COMMITMENTS KEPT SECRET IN ORDER TO MUTE CRITICISM FROM ARAB MILITANTS.

THESE DETAILS INCLUDE PRESIDENT ANWAR SADAT'S REMOVAL OF AMERICAN FIRMS THAT DO BUSINESS WITH ISRAEL FROM THE ARAB BOYCOTT LIST..." KISSINGER

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